

CIRCUMCISION

AND

BAPTISM.

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CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

LAST autumn the subject of Christian baptism was discussed in several discourses, delivered in Union Chapel, St. Peter's Road. The Rev. George Sutherland presented the Pædobaptist view here, and the author of this tract the Baptist view. This publication contains the substance of one of the discourses then delivered in support of Baptist sentiments. The propositions here combated were maintained by Mr. S., in one of his discourses, delivered as above. My tract is not intended as a reply to that discourse; as I did not hear it, and as it is not before me. But as Mr. S.'s propositions, kindly furnished to me by himself, really sketch the outline of an argument in regard to the *subjects* of baptism, I here take occasion to set my views on this part of the baptismal controversy over against his views: regarding those views, however, as held by him in common with others, rather than as being peculiar to himself.

It is not for party's sake that I put forth my tract, but for the sake of what seems to me to be important truth, and truth sadly trodden under foot. To any who can shew me, that I have here mistaken the mind of the Spirit, I shall be deeply thankful. Yet if any attempt be made in this line, I must be refuted by argument, not by assumption—confronted by Divine authority, not by human. Mere dogmatism, unsustained by appeals “to the law and the testimony,” will obtain from me no attention: nor, I would add, any thing that may be collateral only, or irrelevant, or, least of all, that may savour of offensive personality.

It might have been well if my tract had appeared before Mr. Sutherland had left us. I can say with truth, however, that I have not intentionally delayed its issue until his departure. Why should I have done so? since he has certainly left behind him gentlemen quite as capable as himself of impugning my argument, should they deem it fitting to do so. But there; I would neither invite hostility, nor deprecate it. In any case, MAY GOD DEFEND THE RIGHT!

I just add, that, while I may use the terms, *Pædobaptism*, *infant baptism*, &c., I do not mean to admit, that infant baptism is any baptism at all. I employ such phraseology for convenience sake, and not by way of concession. As Paul, in writing to the Galatians, speaks of pretended gods, which yet, he says, “by nature are no gods;” and of “another gospel, which,” he adds, “is not another,” but is in truth no gospel; so, as an advocate of the “one baptism” of the New Testament, when I refer to other baptisms, I yet do not recognize them as baptisms at all. They are, in my view, usurping baptisms, false baptisms; having a baptismal name, but the name only, without the essential character. As Christians I esteem and love many who practise such baptisms; but for their practice itself I have no respect. It involves, as I think, mischievous error, sore evil; and the sooner both church and world are freed from it, the better.

J. D.

Charlottetown, P. E. I., July, 1867.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.



THE QUESTION STATED.

Does the covenant of God with Abraham, "the covenant of circumcision," as Stephen styles it, supply any authority for the practice of infant baptism? The advocates of that practice generally, though not universally, reply here in the affirmative. The advocates of believers' baptism, on the other hand, reply here in the negative. It is my purpose, in these pages, to maintain this negative. And my position is this,—

That the Abrahamic covenant furnishes no warrant for the practice of infant baptism.

PAUL ON CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

There is one passage in the New Testament, upon which Pædobaptists lay great stress, which brings circumcision and baptism together. It occurs Col. ii. 10—12. Let us attend, first of all, to its teachings.

HOW DOES IT READ?

"And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised *with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*" Here I pause. Here indeed is circumcision. But

WHAT KIND OF CIRCUMCISION?

It is a *spiritual* circumcision, and not a carnal one. It is made "*without hands,*" and not with them. It consists in "*putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,*" and not in cutting off any portion of the human fleshly person. And this is "*the circumcision of Christ,*" and not of Moses. And yet we find a circumcision resembling this both in Moses and the prophets. Thus we read, Deut. xxx. 6. "And the Lord thy God will *circumcise thy heart,* and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And thus again, Jer. iv. 4. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your *heart,* ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem." Paul gives us the same thought, Rom. ii. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly;

neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one *inwardly*; and circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, and *not* in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of *God*." In this way we arrive, first, at the typical meaning of the Jewish circumcision. It did not terminate in itself, but pointed ultimately at the circumcision and sanctification of the heart. And then we are taught what is meant by "the circumcision of Christ." It is no mere outward rite. It is *not*, as some Pædobaptists seem to maintain, another name for baptism. It is simply the work of the Spirit, in applying the work of Christ to the hearts of men, so as to "circumcise their hearts," and make an effectual separation between them and their sins. And *this* is "the circumcision of Christ."

THE BAPTISMAL BURIAL.

The apostle, having brought out the thought indicated as above, proceeds to another. "Buried with him,"—that is Christ,—“in baptism; wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” The Colossians are taught here, that baptism is at once a death, a burial, and a resurrection. Like circumcision, it is an outward rite. But, like circumcision again, it is a deeply significant rite. It exhibits the inward and spiritual communion of believers with their Lord in his death, his burial, and his resurrection. Or, as we have the thought more at large, Rom. vi 3, 4. “Know ye not, that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Such is evidently the meaning of the apostle in the latter part of this passage from the Colossians; and the passage transcribed from the one epistle, that to the Romans, is a striking commentary upon the terms here employed in the other.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM UNITED.

In the verse following this passage the apostle seems in his argument to join the two rites together, both that of the old dispensation, and that of the new; alluding to them, however, rather than naming them:—“And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses.” “Dead,” buried, “quicken,”—all of which are typified in baptism. “Uncircumcised in the flesh;” but then forgiven in Christ, and the power of sin broken while its guilt is taken away; and so made to experience “the circumcision of Christ.”

BAPTISM NOT SUBSTITUTED FOR CIRCUMCISION.

Wherefore, if my interpretation here be correct, it may safely be inferred, that the Holy Spirit in this place by no means instructs us in the existence of such a relation between circumcision and baptism as that for which many of our Pædobaptist friends contend. Rather, as in some other places, the apostle, in his zeal for the inward establishment and growth of those to whom he wrote, is concerned here to accumulate considerations from every quarter, in order to wean them from earth, and lift them to heaven—to wean them from the fleshly, and build them up in the spiritual—and especially to withhold them from settling down in mere rites, whether of the old covenant, or of the new. To which end he would lead them into such an alliance with Christ, and acquaintance and oneness with him, as Moses and the prophets first, and then the apostles, evermore contemplated, and apart from which one of the grand and ultimate purposes both of the Old Testament and of the New, in the deliverance of the children of God from the power of indwelling sin, must still fall short of its realization.

A COROLLARY.

But now, while infant baptism, as the ritual successor of the Mosaic circumcision, cannot be found in this passage from the Colossians, neither is it to be so found in any other place in the New Testament. In which case, so far as the New Testament is concerned, the chosen foundation of very many of those who, as Protestants, maintain infant baptism, slides from beneath their feet. Neither Christ nor his apostles teach, that Christian baptism is intended to take the place of the ancient circumcision; or, as Dr. Dwight broadly puts it, that “circumcision was the same ordinance with baptism.” If it be so, the evidence remains yet to be adduced.

THE APPEAL TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

But if the New Testament is really silent here, may we not fall back upon the Old Testament, and find something there which shall make up for the silence of the New? It is evident, as stated above, that many think so. I might, indeed, on good and sufficient grounds, demur to an appeal of this kind. But for once I consent to turn to Moses, and hear him on this question,—Does the Abrahamic covenant, as exhibited by him, furnish any sort of basis for the practice of infant baptism under the Gospel dispensation? And so I proceed to the examination of certain arguments put forward among us of late by way of establishing an affirmative reply to this question.

A FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITION.

¶ Thus, it is laid down here as a fundamental proposition, "That the Old and New Testaments are equally authoritative."

GRANTED: WHAT THEN?

Suppose, now, I grant this proposition. I would yet ask, Whence do the writers of the Old Testament derive their authority? Is it not from our glorious Lord himself? It is "the testimony of Jesus,"—about Jesus, and given by Jesus,—which "is the spirit of prophecy;" Rev. xix. 10.—of prophecy in all its compass of meaning, alike under all the dispensations of mercy towards men. It were easy here to cite proofs, and supply illustrations. But is it necessary to amplify in this case? Have I not here the common verdict of evangelical interpreters? I content myself with a few references. Will the reader, then, be pleased to turn to the following passages?—Heb. i. 1, 2. John i. 17. Luke ix. 30, 31. Do not these passages give to that voice from heaven a peculiar and solemn emphasis,—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM?” Matt. xvii. 5. Surely we cannot err, in obedience to that voice, in assigning a supremacy to the position and teachings of our Lord; taking heed to him rather than to any other, *inspired though he may be*: taking heed indeed to them likewise; yet doing so in deference to him, and for his sake. Nor can we err, farther, in thinking that He, “the Lord from heaven,” can do what he will in his own kingdom;—can not only make laws, but repeal them, and give us new ones instead of the old. And if, finally, He himself hath exalted the New Testament above the Old, we do *not* disparage the Old Testament, as is charged upon us by some of the advocates of infant baptism, when we put it where himself has put it, and regard the glory of the one as utterly eclipsed amid the brighter glories of the other.*

THE ABOVE APPLIED.

But now is it asked, What has all this to do with the baptismal question? I answer, “Much every way.” Our Pædobaptist friends can find no direct precept for their rite in the New Testament. But they think they perceive something to their purpose in the Old. They therefore go about to shew, that the Old Testament is invested with an authority entitling it to some sort of right to dictate New Testament ordinances. On the other hand we, as Baptists, deny that the Old Testament is possessed of any *such* authority. The Old Testament dispensation, we maintain,

* See here 2 Cor. iii.

was such as Christ himself made it for Old Testament times, and Old Testament purposes. And when that same Christ becomes incarnate, and sets up his New Testament dispensation, he does then what he pleases with his own Old Testament institutions. *His* they are, and in his hands; and so he does with them what he pleases.

CIRCUMCISION ABOLISHED.

And this one thing, among others, he *has* done. He has utterly *abolished circumcision*. The record in regard to this is given Acts xv. 1, 23—29. We there read, that “certain men, who went down from Judea to Antioch, taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” Then, when this matter had been considered, in a council held in Jerusalem, under the immediate presidency and guidance of the Holy Spirit,—the only church council ever so held, or so sanctioned,—the conclusion which was reached was embodied in a decree: in which decree “the apostles, and elders, and brethren,” and the Holy Spirit united. Its enacting portion is given in these words:—“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things,—That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.” Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, tells us *why* circumcision was thus abolished. His words are these, as given ch. v. 3—6. “I testify . . . to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace. For we, through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

APOSTOLIC TEACHING APPLIED.

Oh! how much there is here! First, in regard to circumcision. And then, more remotely, in what may well be applied to the question of infant baptism. As to circumcision, it lay at the root of the old ceremonial law. It involved every one who received it in an obligation to observe the whole of that law. It thus, as observed after the Gospel had come, struck at the work of Christ; who came to fulfil that law, and then to set it aside, and instead of it to give us the “law of faith.” And therefore it must be abolished, that it might not stand in the way of the Gospel, with its freedom, its purity, and its love. It must be abolished—this rite of circumcision, and the whole ceremonial law with it; that

thus men might not be tempted to trust in that law, and in this way to "fall from grace," and abandon the great Gospel principle which alone can save their souls, and so after all perish in their sins. And in this way, passing now to the matter of baptism, we obtain a glimpse, and something more, of one weighty reason why, as we Baptists maintain, unconscious babes are not now to be brought into any such relationship with the church of God as that into which they were introduced in ancient days. The old law was a carnal law. Men were brought under it by ceremonial observances. But the new law, "the law of faith," is a spiritual law. Under it none has a right to a place in the church of God, unless he is a partaker of that spiritual grace, the grace of faith. This, of course, excludes infant membership from the church, and every thing that makes any approach to such membership. It takes away circumcision, and provides no substitute for circumcision. All who cling to circumcision, or plead for something instead of it under the Gospel, do in effect, whether they are aware of it or not, go back to the old law, and desire to incorporate some of its principles, at least, into the new Christian dispensation. But Christ will not have this. There is danger in it. Let any church begin with a carnal principle—a principle that goes to confound the church with the world, and God only knows whither they may drift—how far they may get away from the grace of the Gospel—nor how justly they may expose themselves to rebukes such as Paul addressed to those ancient Galatian professors. Oh! when will Christians in these later days come to see these things; and so be led at last to abandon the carnal rite of infant baptism, with all its principles and tendencies?

ANOTHER FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITION.

II. But now here is another fundamental proposition; namely, "That the church of God is one in all ages."

THE TRUE STATE OF THE CASE.

No doubt there is truth in this proposition. In certain respects there *has* existed a oneness in the church from its beginning until now; and there will be a oneness for ever. It is not necessary, however, that I should stay to illustrate this statement. I proceed rather to observe, that highly important differences are yet to be traced between the church under Abraham and Moses, and the church under Christ. One of these appears in respect to their *membership*. Every child of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, when duly circumcised, *converted or unconverted*, was regarded as a member of the Jewish church, and was entitled, as such, to all the ordinances of that church. But is this, or any

thing like this, I would ask, the constitution of the Christian church? How reads the commission? "He that *believeth*, and is baptized shall be saved." Mark xvi. 16. And were not the apostolic churches addressed as "saints and faithful brethren in Christ," or in terms of the like import? as in Col. i. 2. Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Cor. i. 1, &c. And as to *ordinances*, the ancient church and the later differ in this respect,—that while our Christian ordinances relate immediately to spiritual objects, and facts, and truths, and expectations, the Mosaic ordinances were, in the first instance, simply outward and carnal in their aspects. Wherefore the apostle Paul describes all of them as "carnal ordinances." Heb. ix. 10. Whatever in them was spiritual looked forward to the future, and was but shadowy and typical. All these, moreover, were only temporary, and could be no other. "Imposed" only "until the time of reformation," when Christ should come, their great antitype and substance, they were "ready to vanish away." Heb. ix. 10. viii. 13. From the whole of which it is manifest, that the church, in all respects, has *not* been one in all ages. It has passed out of one form into another. The patriarchal has passed into the Mosaic. That, again, has passed into the Christian. While this too shall be changed at last into the church of the resurrection, sinless, perfect, and eternal.

INFANT BAPTISM FINDS HERE NO SUPPORT.

Now if these things are so, then it is easy to see, that there is nothing in the assumed oneness of the church in every age that can aid the argument in favour of infant baptism. On the contrary, in the differences to which I have pointed, as existing between the earlier church and the latter, there is every thing to make that argument of no effect. Which statement is abundantly corroborated by the language of Jeremiah, as quoted by Paul, in speaking of the old and vanishing covenant, and the new and abiding one. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Heb. viii. 6—13. Especially we have here these words:—"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. . . . And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." *All*—not all men, as is here often understood; but all who have an interest in the new and better covenant. "All shall *know* me, from the least to the greatest." When terms like these can fitly be applied to unconscious babes, then, but not before, they may be regarded as entitled to the privileges of the new covenant. Until then, no argument derived from the oneness of the church of God in every age, as pleaded by Pædobaptists, can establish the claim of infants to the ordinances or the blessings of the new covenant.

AN ARGUMENT FROM THE PRECEDING PROPOSITIONS.

III. It is farther maintained, by way of building upon the basis laid in the above propositions, that "the covenant with Abraham embraced chiefly spiritual mercies, and extended to the Gentile church of all ages."

CONFUSION OF THOUGHT.

There seems to be great confusion of thought here—a confusion which pervades the views of all who plead for infant baptism upon the basis of the Abrahamic covenant. In order to dissipate that confusion, I will endeavour to place this covenant in its true Scriptural light. Its relation to the baptismal question, or rather, the absence of any such relation, will then be apparent.

WHAT WAS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT?

By a covenant, then, we are to understand generally an engagement. God's covenant with Abraham was, his engagement to "bless him, and make him a blessing." Or, to give it more particularly, it runs thus:—"I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. . . . And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed—Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. . . . So shall thy seed be—As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. . . . Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son . . . ; and thou shalt call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Gen. xii. 2, 3. xv. 5. xvii. 4, 7, 8, 19. Such is the substance of this famous covenant with Abraham. We are told, moreover, that when God gave this covenant to his servant, especially when he said to him, "So shall thy seed be, . . . he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. xv. 5, 6. By way of confirming this covenant to Abraham, there was given to him the ordinance of circumcision; and so it came to be called "the covenant of circumcision." Acts vii. 8. And Paul adds, that the patriarch "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which he had yet being uncircumcised." Rom. iv. 11.

THE COVENANT TWOFOLD.

Now this covenant was twofold. It was partly spiritual, and partly temporal. The spiritual related chiefly to Christ; in whom, indeed, all the promises made to Abraham were comprehended. Here, too, wrapped up in Christ, we find Abraham's spiritual seed—the whole family of believers. Hence says Paul, Gal. iii. 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to thy SEED, which is Christ." And again, the same apostle says, Rom. iv. 18. that the patriarch "against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be." Thus it was, as Paul goes on to tell us, that Abraham believed, and that his faith "was imputed to him for righteousness." And so it was too, as we are also instructed by the same apostle, that he became "the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. iv. 22, 11, 12, Dr. Cramp* remarks here, that "the covenant thus made with Abraham embraced believers, and none but believers. It was the declaration of God's purpose to establish a church in the world, in the salvation of which he would 'shew forth his praise.' This purpose was gradually developed, and has been in full operation ever since the accomplishment of the redemption by our Lord and Saviour. All that believe enter into covenant with God, and are blessed accordingly. Till they believe, they have no part nor lot in the matter. 'They that are *of faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham.'" Gal. iii. 9.

THE COVENANT IN ITS TEMPORAL ASPECT.

As to the temporal in this covenant, this was for the sake of the spiritual. Here God constituted Abraham the head of his race in the line of Isaac and Jacob. Here too he promised Canaan to his servant; which promise he fulfilled when he gave that land to his posterity in the line of Isaac and Jacob, and continued its possession to them until Christ came. Circumcision was given to him as the sign or token of this covenant. It was a Jewish ordinance, appointed only to be abolished with the dispensation to which it belonged. Thus the providence of God wrought in harmony with his love; and Christ filled his throne of old, as now, though hidden behind the shadow of ancient dispen-

* In his *Catechism of Christian Baptism*.

sations, ruling *in* his church, and for his church, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

NO SUPPORT FOR INFANT BAPTISM HERE.

But now what has all this to do with baptism? What support can be derived hence for infant baptism? None, I answer, none; and proceed to justify my negation. Especially do I propose to shew, that there is nothing in the Jewish rite of circumcision which supplies a foundation, or was ever intended to do so, for the Christian rite of baptism.

THE TRUE PLACE OF CIRCUMCISION.

1. *Circumcision belongs to the temporal part of the Abrahamic covenant, and not to the spiritual.*

It was probably, from its beginning, a Jewish distinction, though some other nations seem to have derived it from the Jews. To them, however, it meant what it could mean to none beside. It set them apart as the seed of Abraham. It signified to them the fulfilment of the temporal promises made to Abraham. It was also intended to remind them of their obligations to moral purity—that they should not only be circumcised in the flesh, but in heart and spirit likewise. But it did not *secure* to them the enjoyment of any spiritual blessing. I do not forget here what is said about circumcision as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" of Abraham. *But* it doubtless was to that illustrious patriarch. It was a *personal* attestation of the favour of God to him. It was "a seal" and an assurance of the descent of the promised Saviour through him, in the line of Isaac—of that Saviour through whom he was made righteous, or justified. *But that was all.* It is nowhere described as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" of any besides Abraham: not even of the faith of Isaac and Jacob. Much less of that of any others. Such it could not be. Multitudes of circumcised Jews had no faith that could justify them—no righteousness to be attested to them. It is a *son* of Abraham, a partaker of circumcision, whom his great ancestor beholds from heaven, across the awful impassable gulf, "lifting up his eyes in hell being in torment." Luke xvi. 23. And alas! how many of his brethren, it may well be apprehended, have fallen into the like misery! Circumcision did not save them. It was never intended to save them. It conveyed to them no spiritual blessing, since no such blessing was necessarily involved in it. To Abraham himself it was no more than "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he* had yet being *uncircumcised*." And that righteousness flowed to him, not through his circumcision, but through his faith. Thus clearly circumcision is seen to be

wholly unfitted to constitute the foundation of any Christian ordinance. Or if any persist in so regarding it, it can only be the foundation of an ordinance which, like the ancient rite itself, neither implies nor insures the possession of any spiritual good—which a man may receive, and after all perish. And as circumcision is *unfit* to become the basis of a Christian rite, so neither for any such purpose has it been appointed. If it has been so appointed, where, I ask, is the Scripture which distinctly says so? Until that is adduced, argument in this matter might well come to an end.

CIRCUMCISION ENTIRELY ERADICATED.

2. I observe, that we find the rite of circumcision expressly set aside, so far as the Gentiles are concerned, by New Testament declarations; while its very principle is carefully removed from the midst of the Christian dispensation.

All this, in effect, has been proved above. Here, however, I would cite three passages, in addition to some heretofore presented, as bearing upon these matters. In two of these we are instructed in the mind of the Spirit as to the influence of all mere outward distinctions upon our eternal destinies. Here is one, from Col. iii. 11. "Where,"—that is, in Christ,—"*there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.*" Here is the other, from Gal. iii. 26—29. "*Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" And let it be observed, that while we have here both circumcision and baptism, together with a reference to Abraham's seed, yet the interest which any have in Christ is traced, not to baptism, not to circumcision, not to descent from Abraham; but simply to faith:—"For ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus—*And if ye be Christ's, THEN* are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Oh! how little the Word thus makes, in regard to spiritual interests, of all outward rites, and earthly relationships! Under the Gospel they are nothing—yea, worse than nothing, when they come to be regarded as though they conveyed any spiritual benefit. John the Baptist, in the other passage which I now come to quote, is full to the point here. We read, in Luke iii. 7, 8. that "he said to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers! who

hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Thus does John instruct us in the true character of New Testament baptism. It is not the baptism of relationship, but "the baptism of repentance." Aye, and of faith too: as we have it in the words of Paul, Acts xix. 4. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance; saying unto the people, that they should *believe* on Him who should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus." And this, I beg to say, and this only, is New Testament baptism; since there is not to be found in the New Testament a single instance in which baptism was administered without a previous profession of repentance and faith.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

So then the difference between circumcision and baptism, and the entire absence of all relationship between them,—certainly of such relationship as is pleaded for by the advocates of infant baptism,—comes out here in the strongest light. The one was for unconscious babes, and for them of one sex only; while the other is for men and women, regarded as the subjects of repentance and faith. The one had its right place amid carnal ceremonies, appointed but for a time, and destined to be superseded by the better things of the Gospel. The other, although ceremonial in its nature, is directly associated with spiritual character, and spiritual purposes; while, as interwoven with the Gospel dispensation, it is destined to continue as long as that dispensation itself shall endure. And if these things are so, then have I not a right to ask, what becomes of the reasoning which would make the ancient circumcision a foundation for Christian baptism?

ANOTHER ARGUMENT FROM THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

IV. I come now to a farther proposition, embracing several other points in regard to the Abrahamic covenant. This proposition affirms, That "that covenant acknowledged the connection between parent and child; asserted the transmission of a spiritual blessing from the former to the latter; and declared that the sign and seal of the covenant should be given to children."

CONNECTION BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD UNDER THE LAW.

I ask here, What *kind* of a connection or relation was it that the law of circumcision recognized as existing between parent and child? Was it much more, if any thing more, than the carnal relation? Every son of Abraham according to the flesh was en-

titled to circumcision; and after that to all the other ordinances of the Jewish church. But was there any thing beyond this? Here were outward benefits conveyed; but certainly no inward, no spiritual ones. If a Jew attained to these, it must be by something better than circumcision, or any outward rite. So Paul expressly lays it down, when he says, in language already cited, that Abraham became “the father of circumcision to them who are *not of the circumcision only*; but who also walk *in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised.*” And what have we Ezek. xviii. 1—4? “The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine. *As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*” There was the principle, even under the old dispensation, in regard to spiritual and personal religion, and the final destinies of men. Let us see now, at the close of the chapter from which I here quote, how this principle is applied, vv. 30—32. “*Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,* saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” Even the law of circumcision thus gave no sanction to the theory of relative religion, as though it might be regarded as a substitute for personal. That is, mere relationship, though it might entitle an individual to certain outward religious advantages, could go no farther. If a man were saved, it must be by his *own* repentance, and his *own* faith. The repentance and faith of others could not avail for him instead of his own.

THE DESCENT OF SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS FROM PARENT TO CHILD
UNDER THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT: WHERE IS IT ASSERTED?

The proposition now before us affirms, “that the Abrahamic covenant asserted the transmission of a spiritual blessing from parent to child.” I beg to ask, Where in all the Bible do we meet with a statement like this? I know, indeed, what Paul says, Rom. iii. 1, 2. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Nor do I forget

that striking summary, Rom. ix. 4, 5. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." But how are we to understand these passages? The apostle shall interpret for himself, as in Rom. ii. 25. "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Stephen too shall furnish us with a terrific comment upon the words of Paul, in his denunciation of the Sanhedrim that put him to death, Acts vii. 51—53. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears! ye do always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." And the whole may instruct us in the precise value, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, of that "transmission of spiritual blessing" which the proposition before us affirms. Which very transmission the apostle Paul esteemed of so little worth, that, in his famous passage in Phil. iii. 4—8. he puts his pure Jewish descent, together with his circumcision, among the "all things" which he counted "but loss,"—yea, "dung,"—"for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." And lastly, this same apostle brings out a similar contrast, in that other famous passage, Gal. vi. 12—14. "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised." And wherefore? They "desire to have *you* circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." But God forbid that *I* should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

CIRCUMCISION AS A SIGN AND SEAL.

The proposition before us farther states, in regard to this Abrahamic covenant, that it "declared that the sign and seal of the covenant should be given to children." This statement of course refers to circumcision. It may suffice here to point to explanations already given.* I only add, that, while, in Gen. xvii. 10, 11. we find circumcision described as a *sign* or *token* both to Abraham and his posterity, we may yet search the Scriptures in vain to find a passage in which it is described as a *seal* to any besides the great patriarch himself.

* See p. 11.

It thus appears, that again we have here mistaken views, and untenable conclusions. The Abrahamic covenant was not, in certain important points, what the proposition now before us represents it as having been; and the arguments for infant baptism as here suggested should seem therefore to be wholly invalidated.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN BROUGHT INTO THE CHURCH TOGETHER.

V. It is farther laid down, in regard to circumcision, that "this sign and seal of spiritual blessings was given to children by Divine authority four hundred years before Moses, and continued through all ages down till the apostles. Parents and children were brought into the visible church."

PAUL ON THE DATE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

This proposition refers to the *date* of the Abrahamic covenant. There is a passage in Paul, Gal. iii. 17. which deals with this very topic. Thus it reads:—"And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." "The covenant!"—what covenant have we here?—and in what special aspect is it presented? It may, indeed, be styled, as Stephen styles it, "the covenant of circumcision"—the covenant with which circumcision came *afterwards* to be associated, in the manner heretofore stated.* But in what aspect is this covenant here regarded? In the aspect in which it was given to Abraham "while yet in uncircumcision;" for it was years before he was circumcised that God gave to him the promise of "*the seed*; which," says Paul, "is Christ." And it is *this* promise, rather than "the covenant of circumcision," that was "confirmed . . . of God in Christ." This promise, this covenant, does indeed extend to the Gentile church. It is our glory and our boast that it is so. But there is no circumcision here, and no hint of it. Here "Christ is all!"—Christ, and *not* circumcision. No! *nor baptism either*. So that any reference to the date of the covenant which was four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law, enfeebles the argument for infant baptism rather than strengthens it; if it be not entirely fatal to it.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

"Parents and *children* were brought into the visible church." It was so *once*. It ought to be so *now*. Thus do Pædobaptists argue. And then it is inferred, that Baptists inflict a great injury upon *their* children, in refusing to conform to this constitution. It is even said, that as uncircumcised children were cut off from

* See p. 9.

the Israelitish people, so the children of Baptists are cut off from covenant mercies. I ask, therefore, what is meant by an insinuation like this? Does the rite of infant baptism confer regenerating grace? By no means! says the author of the propositions considered in these pages, while many of his Pædobaptist brethren here concur with him. Well, then, I would further ask, adapting to my present purpose some questions once asked by Paul, as cited above,—“What advantage then hath the [Pædobaptist]? or what profit is there of [infant baptism]?” If New Testament precedent in relation to the ordinances were here considered, it ought at least to confer a right to the Lord’s Supper; since in that book we uniformly find baptism and the Lord’s Supper in immediate association. The Greek Church, after its fashion, follows this precedent, while giving both baptism and the communion to unconscious infants. But Pædobaptist churches nearer home withhold the Lord’s Supper from multitudes whom they baptize; while Baptists, after the manner of the New Testament, *always* unite the two ordinances. But now, if baptized infants are neither regenerated by their baptism, nor admitted through their baptism to the Lord’s Supper, what does *their* baptism do for them more than the *non*-baptism of *our* little ones? Does it entitle them to any earnest practical care for their salvation, which the children of Baptists may not, and do not receive? Does it place within their reach any evangelical promises which the children of Baptists may not claim as theirs also? If not, from what covenant mercies are these unhappy children cut off, to which the children of Pædobaptists have access? Still is it said, “There is great virtue in obeying the commands of God?” Doubtless it is so; and that, it may cheerfully be conceded, whether we can perceive the reason of those commands, or not. As we have it, Ps. xix. 11. “In keeping of them there is great reward.” But then, it may fairly be added, that that virtue must be exceedingly subtle and impalpable,—oh! who shall search it out?—which is as much within the reach of those who *disobey* the commands of God as of those who keep them. And yet, if infant baptism be a command of God, we have still to learn what anti-Pædobaptists lose by their disobedience to that command—a disobedience remarkable alike for its depth of principle, and its incurable obstinacy. We Baptists think we have seen the blessing of God, in many ways, upon ourselves, our brethren, and our fathers; and many others have seen it too, and have cheerfully owned it. And yet, if our Pædobaptist brethren are right, we have been living for ages in disobedience, and are notoriously and incorrigibly disobedient down to this day. Strange obedience theirs, which brings with it no special blessing. And,

on our part, a disobedience as strange, which brings with it no appreciable penalty. When Moses, in the case of his second son, had failed in his obedience to the law of circumcision,—as the record is given us Ex. iv. 24—26.—he was severely chastised for his neglect. How is it, if we too, as anti-Pædobaptists, are guilty as he was, that *our* neglect entails upon us no marks of the Divine displeasure?

INFANT BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!

VI. It was affirmed, under the proposition last considered, that “through all ages, down till the apostles, parents and children were brought into the visible church.” It is farther maintained, under a sixth proposition, that “the apostles followed this Divine order in admitting persons to the church of Christ.”

WHERE IS THE RECORD OF THIS?

But where is this on record? Are we referred here to the household baptisms of the New Testament? Is it argued, that surely there were infants in these households; and that these, as a portion of them, must have participated in the household baptism? I have only to repeat here, what has so often been said before. We have four cases of household baptism in the Gospel history. There is the household of Lydia, composed of “brethren,” whom Paul and Silas “comforted” before they left Philippi. There is the household of the Philippian jailor—a “believing” and a “rejoicing” household. There is the household of Crispus at Corinth, whose members, with many of the Corinthians besides, “heard, believed, and were baptized.” And there is the household of Stephanas, who “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” Acts xvi. 15, 32—34, 40. xviii. 8. 1 Cor. i. 16. xvi. 15. There *might* have been infants in some of these households. But certainly they were not among the baptized; since such members of them as were baptized are so described as to shew that they were believing adults; in which character alone they were admitted to the holy baptismal rite. Thus there is nothing in these household baptisms to sustain the conclusions which our Pædobaptist friends would fain derive from them.

“CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE.”

VII. The attempt to find infant baptism in the New Testament is aided by a reference to certain passages which are supposed to supply “corroborative evidence” looking in that direction.

CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

There is Mark x. 13—16. We need scarcely cite the familiar and beautiful record. But now, what have we here? We hear

the words of Christ,—“Suffer the little children to come unto me.” We mark what followed upon these words. The little ones were brought to the Saviour. And what did he do with them? Did he baptize them? Surely if he had done so, the evangelist would have told us so. But what did the Saviour do? “He took” the little ones “up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” That was all. It is clear that he did *not* baptize them. Has any painter of this touching story presumed to turn it into a story of baptism? The theologians argue about it as though it were such a story. But no painter, no matter what his views on the baptismal question, has ever thought fit, I believe, to put the theological assumption upon his canvass. No! infant baptism finds no support here. For let us look now at ver. 15. in the narrative of Mark. “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” Our Lord says nothing, and does nothing that can be construed into a sanction for infant baptism. But, as he never lost an opportunity for sowing the seeds of heavenly truth, he does take occasion here to inculcate an important spiritual lesson; which lesson relates rather to the faith of adults than to the baptism of unconscious babes. And thus this charming incident in the life of our Lord, so far as it suggests any thing at all on the subject of baptism, supports our views as Baptists rather than militates against them.

THE CASE OF ZACCHEUS.

But now there is Luke xix. 9. “This day is salvation come to this house,”—that is, the house of Zaccheus,—“forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” But how this should testify on behalf of infant baptism is to me utterly inconceivable. To be sure we have “Abraham” here, and “a son of Abraham,” and “salvation come to the house” of this “son of Abraham.” And these expressions doubtless suggest to minds duly prepossessed certain ideas of the Abrahamic covenant, and of the claims of the children of the covenant to its signs and seals, and of the participation of the “house” of this “son of Abraham” in the spiritual heritage of their father. Yet, after all, what should we really seem to have here? “Salvation is come to this house.” And was it not so? and had not the whole house a lively interest in the blessed, and mighty, and manifest change which had occurred in the case of the head of that house? And was not this man fitly styled “a son of Abraham,” not in the flesh only, but much more in the spirit? the one having beheld with gladness the day of Christ while yet afar off; and the other seeing the day of that Christ as at length arrived, and having joyfully welcomed him, not to his house only, but also

to his heart. Which simple Scriptural explanations would seem to bring out the leading thoughts involved in our Lord's words here, without any supposition of recondite references to the doctrine of infant baptism, or of believers' baptism, or of any baptism at all, unless it were the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

PETER'S PENTECOSTAL SERMON.

Still there is the exhortation addressed to the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 38—40. "Be baptized, every one of you," says Peter. And then he subjoins this encouragement,—"For the promise is unto you, *and your children.*" Surely that is decisive on the side of infant baptism. But let us look a little farther, taking in the connection of these words;—"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" Do not these words speak for themselves? The "children" here are evidently such as are capable of being "called"—repentant, believing, fitted to receive spiritual gifts. Alas! for the authority of infant baptism, if it is to be deduced from a passage like this!

HOLY CHILDREN.

Finally, here, the passage, 1 Cor. vii. 14. is adduced as a witness on behalf of infant baptism. Thus it reads:—"The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The passage is a difficult one. The key to it lies in the meaning to be assigned in it to the word "holy." The word is used in different senses. Thus Moses speaks of the Israelitish nation as "a holy nation." They were set apart for holy uses—to uphold the worship of the One Holy God in the midst of an idolatrous and unholy world. Thus as a nation they were "holy" in the absence of personal holiness; though, meanwhile, there were among them many truly pious and holy individuals. In the passage before us the idea of holiness seems to be associated with that of legitimacy. The Corinthian believers had conceived the notion, that it was unlawful for Christian people to maintain the married relation with idolatrous partners. They seemed to think, as Dr. Cramp remarks,* "that marriage was dissolved when either of the parties embraced Christianity. Change of religion severed the marriage tie. This," proceeds the doctor, "was denied by the apostle Paul; and he directed the parties to live together, encou-

* In his *Catechism of Christian Baptism.*

raging the believing one to hope the best from the exercise of religious influences. A *holy* marriage,—so he argued,—being a marriage contracted in a lawful manner, the issue of such marriage is *holy*; that is, lawful. But if the change of religion in one of the parties rendered the marriage unlawful, then the children of such marriage would be unholy—unlawful, ‘unclean,’ illegitimate.” Now, if the passage before us be thus correctly interpreted, then there is in it no reference to baptism, and no authority for infant baptism. And indeed nothing can be more precarious than the attempt so often made,—and in the case of infant baptism so notoriously made,—to build up conclusions for which there can be found no clear, direct, Scriptural authority, upon obscure and uncertain premises.

INFANT BAPTISM NOT FORBIDDEN.

VIII. In the absence of direct proof as to the practice of infant baptism in New Testament times, it is pleaded, “Where in the New Testament is infant baptism forbidden?”

A DESPERATE QUESTION.

Surely we have here a desperate and fatal question. What sort of a cause must that be which is driven to a plea like this? Why, of all the mummeries of Rome, how many are directly forbidden in Scripture? If, moreover, to make any thing unlawful which is set up for a religious observance, it must be distinctly prohibited in the Word of God, the “world itself could not contain the books that should be written;” and the Bible must have been made as huge and unreadable as the Statutes at Large. And farther, if a plea like this were accepted as valid, there remains no reason why we, as Protestants, should persist in our prolonged and painful struggle against Rome; but there is every reason rather why we should cease from our anti-Papal warfare, and return to that Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church whose pale our fathers ought never to have abandoned.

I bring my argument to a close with a few PRACTICAL HINTS. And first, I would say to my readers, *Beware of false views, and improper feelings* in regard to the ordinance of baptism. Let no man trust to his baptism. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any saving power associated with baptism. Nay, what says Paul, 1 Cor. i. 17? “Christ sent me, *not* to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” And again, Rom. i. 16. he describes the “*Gospel of Christ*,”—not baptism, or any other outward ordinance, as “the power of God unto salvation.” So, in 1 John i. 7. we are told, that it is “the blood of Jesus Christ,” and not baptismal water,

that "cleanseth from all sin." And yet again, in Acts viii. 23. what says Peter to Simon Magus, a baptized man?—"I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity!" Oh! what an emphasis all this gives to our Lord's great announcement, "Ye must be born again!" John iii. 7. Let no man lose sight of these lessons. He does so at his everlasting peril.

And let no man plume himself upon his clear, Scriptural views of baptism. A man, in a certain sectarian, polemical sense, may be a very good Baptist, and a very poor Christian. No man can be saved as a controversialist. Paul, Col. i. 27. speaks of "Christ *in*" the saints—not Christ without them—nor Christ as a party-badge, or a party-cry, as at one time among the Corinthians, 1 Ep. i. 12.—"Christ *in* you," he says, "the hope of glory." John the Baptist tells those who came to *his* baptism of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," and of Him who should administer that baptism; and thus turns his hearers over from himself to his Lord, and from all outward baptisms to "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Let the advocate of believers' baptism remember these things. Vain is the clear intellect, vain the vigorous maintenance of Bible truth on any point, without the inward, vital experience of that truth. Let each one, therefore, be concerned, first of all, to become acquainted with a "Christ *in*" him—to receive a spiritual baptism from the hands of Christ. Then let baptism in water follow upon this—be found in its own place—do its own work—and bring with it its own benefits. Let baptism be all this, and do all this; *but no more*. Thus, and thus only, will Scriptural views of baptism be sanctified to him who holds them. Apart from this, the clearer the view, the hotter the zeal, the fiercer the contention on the baptismal dogma, or on any other Bible dogma, the greater the guilt here, and the deeper the condemnation hereafter.

2. Next, I would adopt Paul's warning, Phil. iii. 2, "*Beware of the concision!*" So the apostle styles the Judaizing teachers, the first troublers of the first churches. They claimed to be "the circumcision." Nay, says Paul, they are "the *concision*," not "the *circumcision*."* They *cut off* their brethren; they divide the church into parties; and introduce into it snarlings, and every evil work. Wherefore "beware of dogs; beware of evil workers; beware of *the concision*." The epistle to the Galatians amply justifies the epithets which the apostle here applies to these men; as may be seen by a reference to Gal. iii. 1—3, iv. 10, 16, 17. v. 15—17. vi. 12, 13. With his eye upon such men, and such

* KATatome, not PERitome.

things as these, well might the apostle warn his beloved Philip-
pians to "beware of the concision."

But now, have *we* no "concision?"—no followers of these an-
cient Judaizing teachers, with their victims among the Galatians?
Is it too much to say, that the leaven of this ancient "concision"
is to be found in *all* Pædobaptist communities? Among these,
as among those, there is a going back to Moses for their rite.
Many a ceremony beside is also imitated from Moses. Meanwhile,
and more deeply to be deplored, many have "fallen from grace,"
and lost the doctrine of salvation by grace, while leaning to the law
of works. And as to the "works of the flesh," including the dis-
position to "bite, and devour," and persecute, are there not Pæ-
dobaptist communities in which such things notoriously exist? I
do not say, that all Pædobaptist bodies lie open to these charges
in their full force. But I do say, that the carnal principle of infant
baptism bears in its bosom the germs of all these things; and that
the history of Pædobaptist bodies supplies many a sad illustration
of the development of those germs in all their poisonous potency.
Of course I point here, first of all, and chiefly to Rome.* And
while Rome continues such as she is, and while infant baptism
abides at the heart and centre of her system, I surely have a right
to say, giving a new point to the old apostolic warning, "Beware
of dogs; beware of evil workers; BEWARE OF THE CONCISION!"

3. Lastly, I turn to the passage in the epistle to the Philippians,
which follows immediately upon this warning, ch. iii. 3. and com-
mend it to the deep and serious regard of all who bear the Baptist
name. Thus it reads:—"For *we are the circumcision*; who wor-
ship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no
confidence in the flesh." Here, once more, "the circumcision of
Christ" comes before us—that spiritual circumcision of which the
fleshly circumcision was but a type. This circumcision, moreover,
comes out in contrast with "the concision" denounced in the pre-
ceding verse. It is as if the apostle had said, "While they who
claim to be of the circumcision usurp a name to which they have
no right, we would put in our claim to that name, as interpreted
into a spiritual and Christian sense. *We* who worship God in the
Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the
flesh,—*we* are the circumcision, and not these usurpers." Here,
now, is a circumcision against which, as Baptists, we would by no
means protest. On the contrary, we would even dare to place
ourselves, though with all humility, by the side of Paul, with his

* See here an excellent little book, issued by the American Baptist
Publication Society, entitled, "Infant Baptism a Part and Pillar of
Popery. By JOHN GILL, D. D."

Philippian brethren, and aver that we too, in the spiritual sense—we too are the circumcision. We profess to have been “born again”—to have been “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” It is upon the soundness of this our profession that we found our claim to the baptismal rite, and to a place in the church of Christ. And so we claim to be “the circumcision.”

Here, therefore, I would make my appeal to the consciences and hearts of my fellow-Baptists. Let us see to it, brethren, I would say, that, by the grace of God, we “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.” So shall we best vindicate our profession. We shall bring true honour to the great name in which we have been baptized. We shall win the confidence of the saints. We shall command the respect of the ungodly. We shall stand out in acknowledged contrast with the “dogs,” the “evil-workers,” the “concision” of the apostolic age, and of all succeeding ages. We shall be a “people prepared for the Lord;” among whom he will deign to dwell, and by whom he will graciously work. We shall hurl ruin upon Babylon, and all Babylonish structures. Yea, we shall usher in the glories of the millennial jubilee. In which glories we shall bear no inconspicuous part; while yet we take no praise to ourselves, but ascribe all to Him to whom alone all praise belongs.

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